

# Some Wonderful Machines That Aid and Abet Santa Claus



Little Joey was nodding by the stove. His towed head drooped lower and lower over his colored picture book. His fat, tubby little body slouched with weariness, brought on by content and a satiated feeling inwardly.

His eyes closed and the words "Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse."

came to him with pictures of Santa Claus and the sleigh, the reindeer and the chimneys which danced up and down and blurred and became clear and faded away again. An old black crow flapped across the book and disappeared. Then came a witch riding on her broom, with a big black cat tearing madly behind. Little Bo-Peep and all her sheep marched across, and the King of France, with his army, bands playing and colors flying, strode gallantly right on into the stove.

And then out there jumped right before Joey's eyes, the strangest looking person! That is, he was strange at first. But when Joey rubbed his blue eyes and stretched and looked again, he saw the flowing white whiskers, the red coat and trousers and the high boots and then he knew! It was "Sandy Claus!"

"Santa Claus," he saluted, quite self-possessed. He wasn't surprised, he knew there is a Santa Claus and like a good boy always knew that some day he would see him. So he wasn't at all abashed, you see.

"Santa Claus," he said again, and he began to whisper around madly. "Oh, goodie, goodie! I knew you'd come!" White whiskers look at him sadly.

"It's a long time since anyone called me that," he said. "I used to be Santa Claus, but nowadays people don't believe in me any more. They say I'm a myth. Well, they're not far wrong, for I'm nearly one. I'm just a messenger boy, a spy."

## HAS TO RUN ERRANDS.

"A what?" gasped Joey. "A messenger boy and a spy. You see, I have to run the errands for the real Santa Claus, and watch the boys on the earth for him to see that they deserve their presents. And up there at the North Pole they don't allow me to be called Santa Claus any more. They call me 'Major'."

"Why?" queried Joey, all bewitched, for the old man talked fast, as if he had been repressed for a long time.

"Oh, because I have to hop around and do the bidding of others. They put me down on a level with my servants. They even took my reindeer and made them into roasts and steaks and chops and stews and other things for the new Santa Claus."

"Is there a new one?" cried Joey. "Oh, yes. Didn't you know it? Years ago it started in and it wasn't very many years before he had me beaten and made me what I am. I couldn't do anything against him, he was too strong, too fast and too accurate for me. I had to give in, that's all. Would you like to see him?"

"Yes, sir," said Joey, politely. He was awfully curious, but was a good mannered boy and always had been taught that it was the proper thing to keep quiet as possible in the presence of his elders.

"Come on, then," and Joey felt himself whisked through the wall and up a chimney to the roof of the house before he had time to think! "Long time since I've had a chance to do that," chuckled the old man, dusting the soot from his clothes. "Makes me feel young again. Now climb in here, youngster."

Before him Joey saw a wonder-

back. The old man climbed after him, patted the huge bird, and it soared into the air with a horrible coughing noise.

"This bird is what they made me use instead of my reindeer," explained the major. "It's one of the new things brought in by the Santa



Claus of today. I can't say but that it's a great improvement for speed over the old team, but it isn't the same. No, it isn't the same." He shook his head sadly.

## EARTH WHITE WITH SNOW.

They flew on, and on, and on. Beneath them they saw the earth all white with snow, gleaming where the moonlight shone on some broad field of ice.

They passed over the sea, where they saw the smoke coming up from the big steamers, then everything alive passed from view, and they saw only snow, and ice, and more snow. Suddenly there rose before them a great wall of ice.

"Beyond that's the workshops," declared the major. "There's been some change here since the man who wrote the books about Santa Claus visited. We'll be there in a minute."

And he deftly guided the monster through a big passage in the wall which opened suddenly in front of them, and came upon the most wonderful view Joey ever had seen.

There will be miles and miles of huge brick and steel buildings, all belching smoke, and ringing with the most awful clashing and clanging. Sparks flew up into the air and around them, but the monster soared on and on, over endless rows of the buildings, endless lines of little black dots scurrying around like ants.

"That's what it is now," the old man said, pointing below. "It used to be so a man could think, and get time to do something and do it right, and put a little love in with everything he made, but nowadays all they think of is getting out the work."

"They're hustling in double shifts right now, for it's almost Christmas, and they're always talking about 'just simply got to get that stuff out.' But what can I do?"

"I can't get away from here, and they did give me an easy job which keeps me out of this hurly-burly

most of the time, so I can't complain, I guess."

"Why, who did all that?" asked Joey. "The new Santa Claus. You'll see him presently. There's where he lives." The Major pointed to a little house with a tall chimney. "I'm going to go down right there."

Go down they did, in the midst of a throng of grimy-faced workers, and next to a pile of coal, with oil and grease and ashes all scattered around. They passed on and into the house, and Johnny felt that he was in the hottest place he ever had experienced.

## NOISY AS BEDLAM.

Huge fires were there, all gleaming white, and men feeding them with coal. The furnace doors clanged, and the shovels rattled, and sledge bars clashed, and altogether it was a bedlam.

They passed through, and in the next room they saw a huge throne, made like a desk. And here was seated the weirdest thing imaginable.

For a head it had a dynamo, whirling round and round. Its eyes were brightly sparkling electric lights, and its ears were telephone receivers. Its back was a huge boiler, with a fire box for a stomach.

From its shoulders long, clawlike things reached out, waving and wriggling as they swiftly plucked from big baskets, looked them over and wrote something on them.

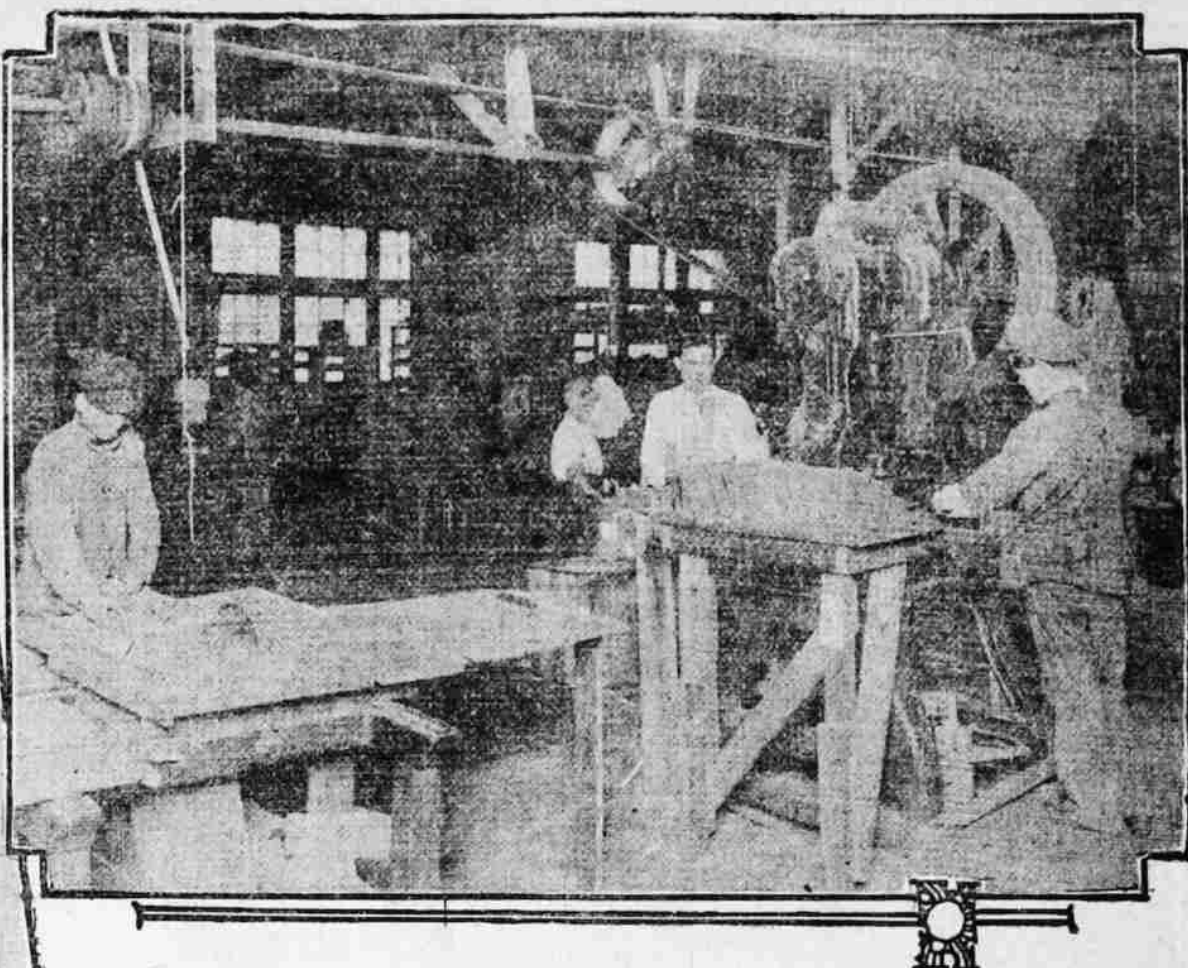
The upper part of his legs were steam cylinders, and the lower piston rods. The right foot looked like a locomotive and the left like a steamroller. His mouth was a combination of a steam whistle and electric bell, and when he opened it steam and sparks spattered out.

"Well, what do you want here?" he roared, and whistled and rang, all at once.

"If you please, Santa Claus," whimpered the old man, "the 100 years are up."

"What 100 years are you talking about?"

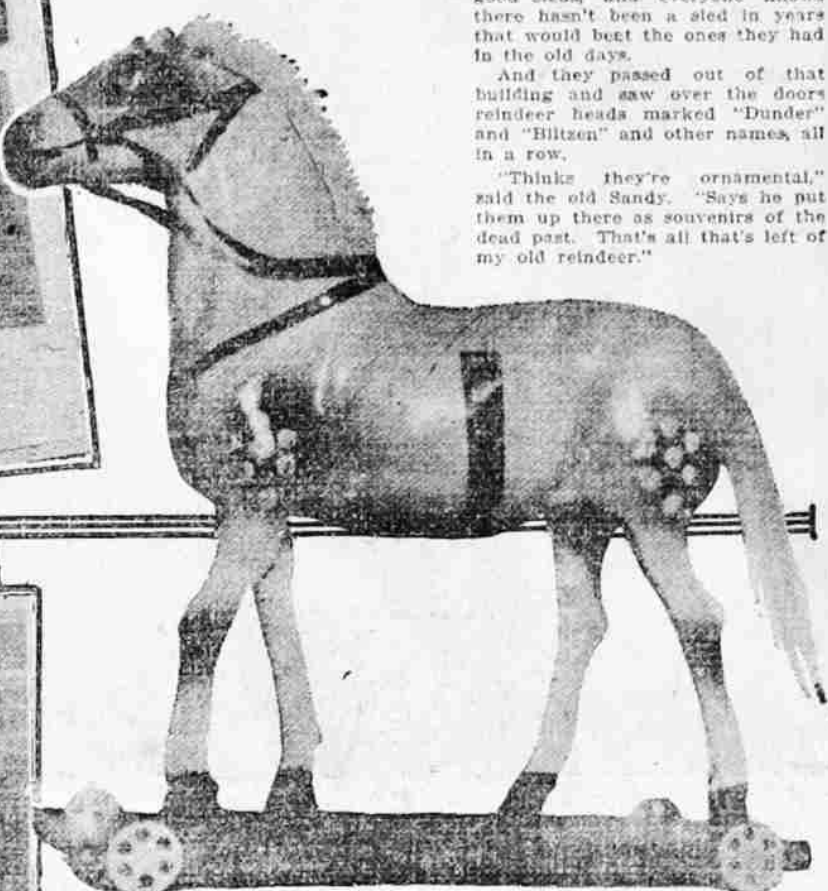
"Why, just 100 years, you know."



let me send out these perfectly good sleds, and everyone knows there hasn't been a sled in years that would beat the ones they had in the old days.

And they passed out of that building and saw over the doors reindeer heads marked "Dunder" and "Biltzen" and other names, all in a row.

"Thanks they're ornamental," said the old Sandy. "Says he put them up there as souvenirs of the dead past. That's all that's left of my old reindeer."



**TWO** views in toy factories, some of the wonderful machines that aid Santa Claus and two mechanical toys to delight youngsters.

ain't like what they used to be. No, sir," He wagged his head again. "Come on."

They entered a little low building

They got to a group of old people in quaint old-fashioned clothes, sitting about quite disconsolate and doing nothing. They bowed deeply as the major approached, and kept silence as he passed beyond.

## SECRETS WELL KEPT.

"Those are my old people," he explained. "I brought them here a few at a time when things got too busy, for me and set them to work. According to the inexorable law of this place, one who comes here never can go away. They fear he may betray the secrets to the children, so they have to stay."

"But they haven't any work to do,

day but he has some 'invention,' as he calls the things, to set up in a shop. He makes his men and women work hard, and gives them little peace in return.

## THOUSAND TO ONE.

"But I must say that what he does is wonderful. Where we used to turn out one toy he turns out a thousand. Where we used to have the reindeer he has strange contrivances that run without anything to draw them, and huge birds like the one we fly on, which do not breathe and never eat, as far as we can see."

"Where I used to send my men out for a whole year to watch the boys and girls, and never would hear from them until they came back, why, he can talk to them every night and know just what is done!"

"He sets it down in a book and there isn't any chance of missing anything. It's what he calls system, but it ain't human, that's what I say."

"Now over here. Lookit this big machine that makes toy soldiers. See! It just reaches out, takes a big piece of lead, cuts it up, runs the pieces through a slide and turns them out packed in boxes ready to ship to earth."

"And here's another machine, brand new this year, which makes wood furniture—just cuts it out like the soldiers, out of blocks of wood. Doesn't cost much, and works quick, and turns 'em out by the thousand."

"In my day we worked over each piece with a jack knife for an hour before it was done. Yet here they come out, all packed in boxes and ready to be sent."

"Here's one machine that cuts out a full set of furniture all at once—table tops, chair backs, legs and everything. Just one stroke it takes. Then they're dumped into this box and get sorted out."

"They're rushed over to this sanding machine which smooths them down and polishes them, and takes off the burr which doesn't look well. Then they're glued together and come out all ready for their boxes. They're packed up, and whizz! off they go."

## DOES TEN MEN'S WORK.

"Furniture isn't all it makes. It fixes up Noah's arks and animals and gins and sword handles and picture frames and almost everything. Where there used to be ten men working them there's just this machine."

"Then this fellow says we've got to have modern things, as he calls 'em, and so he won't let us send out picture puzzles and fire engines that won't go, and things like that. No sir. Everything's got to be real and in working order."

"Here he makes animals that walk around and make noises just like real ones. And he has automobiles that run with gasoline and springs, and he's got what he calls aeroplanes, just like that bird we flew in, only smaller, and real ships that run in the bathtub, and whole railroad systems, from the stars and tracks to tunnels, and telegraph poles and signal blocks."

"If he gives an army he has a whole army, artillery, cavalry, infantry, signal corps, medical corps, baggage trains and everything, and has them so you can work them all at once."

"He has real big games made small, like billiards and polo and tennis and golf, and everything so they can be played in the house when it's too stormy for children to go out."

"It all makes me sick! I don't like it, but the children don't seem to mind. They don't know the difference. He calls it instructive, but I don't. But then, everything today for the children is just like what the grown-ups have, only smaller, and perhaps they do learn more. I don't know. But we'd better get back, for your day's most up."

## JOEY WAS ONLY DREAMING.

They turned back into the big hall where the real Santa Claus was. The monster glared at Joey and reached out his hand to grab him. He opened one of the furnace doors, took Joey by the neck and shook him! Joey smelled something burning and—

He rubbed his eyes and jumped up. His book had fallen into the grate fire and was smoking merrily away. His mother was shaking him soundly by the arm.

"Come, young man," said she. "It's time you were in bed. You ate too much turkey. It's a good thing Christmas comes only once a year."

